



A year ago these Utah fields were a mass of sagebrush. Thanks to Japanese Americans they are now acres of vegetables.

Japanese Colony: Success Story

by GALEN M. FISHER

"Eight months of hardship come to sunlight," is Fred Wada's summary of the experience of his little band of Japanese Americans, following the Pacific Coast evacuation. This story of his patriotism, so simply told here, is warmly recommended to other loyal Americans.

"THE PEOPLE NOBODY WANTS" IS AN EASY CATCH PHRASE, but it gives a false idea of the feelings of many Californians about their evacuated Japanese neighbors. It certainly misrepresents the attitude of a growing proportion of the people in Wasatch County, Utah. In March, 1942, 130 Japanese Americans went to Wasatch County to settle on the George A. Fisher ranch at Keetley. Snow still lay in the gulleys and the ground was hard when they arrived, but within three months they had transformed the bare fields into a thriving truck garden. Their industry and friendliness, their cash payment for goods, their generous readiness to work overtime to meet the labor shortage on surrounding farms soon disarmed the suspicion of their neighbors. In ever-widening circles the word was spread that these citizen Japanese were "just like white folks" and ready to break their backs to win the war. A dynamic personality, Fred L. Wada, accounts for this success story.

When, two months after Pearl Harbor, the army ordered those of Japanese ancestry to leave the Pacific Coast, all were included—young and old, citizens and aliens alike. The deadline set by the army for "voluntary evacuation" was March 29. After that date, all had to go to

guarded assembly centers. Fred Wada, citizen and prosperous produce merchant of Oakland, decided to move out of California at once, and to help a company of his fellow Japanese Americans to go, too.

Born in Bellingham, Wash., thirty-four years ago, of Roman Catholic parents, Mr. Wada was orphaned at twelve. At fourteen he had to stop school and go to work. By the time he was twenty-seven, he was president of the East Bay Food Dealers Association.

Fred Wada's brother, Bill, volunteered in March, 1941; his second brother, Ben, was drafted in January, 1942, and is now a corporal. Fred Wada himself wanted to enlist, but he has a wife and three young children. He reasoned thus: the President calls for increased output of both food and munitions; Japanese Americans are not allowed to make munitions, but they can raise food. He decided to set out, as a patriotic task, to find unused land, form a corps of Americans of Japanese ancestry, and try to break all records at raising crops. The band would not wait to be rounded up by the army, becoming expensive wards of the government. They would go eastward of their own free will and break land like the early pioneers.

That was about February 10—just a year ago.

Mr. Wada read in a newspaper that the farmers of Duchesne County, Utah, needed labor. He went at once to Salt Lake City. At first he met only rebuffs. Even some of the Japanese long resident in Utah threw cold water on his plan, fearing that to bring more Japanese into the state would arouse public hostility toward the established group as well as toward the newcomers. The secretary of the Utah Defense Council, after hearing Mr. Wada's story, suggested that he see David R. Trevithick, director of the State Department of Social Welfare.

At the state capitol, Mr. Wada received his first real encouragement. Mr. Trevithick and his associates were enthusiastic about the plan, and promised to support it, and the welfare director offered a letter of introduction to the commissioner of Duchesne County.

Mr. Wada rented a car and drove out Highway 40, which was piled high with snow on both sides. Thirty-nine miles from Salt Lake City, he stopped to see George A. Fisher, former executive secretary of the State Land Board, now a rancher, and "mayor" of the tiny village of Keetley. Mr. Fisher was interested in leasing his ranch; he also was interested in making possible a fresh start for a group of ousted Japanese Americans. He suggested that the colony establish itself on his land, but Mr. Wada had promised to meet with citizens of Duchesne and Uintah Counties, and he felt this conference must be held before any definite plans were made.

AT ROOSEVELT, THE COUNTY SEAT, HE FOUND 350 PEOPLE ASSEMBLED TO HEAR HIM PRESENT HIS SCHEME, AND TO DISCUSS IT. His limited schooling had given him only an imperfect command of platform English; nevertheless, he told his story impressively. Because of the need for more food to help win the war, he urged that a group of "good Americans of Japanese stock" be encouraged to come with him from California and settle in Utah. All but a few of the proposed colonists, he explained, "are citizens and Christians." All, he added, were hard working, law abiding, eager to cooperate in community affairs. Finally, and very persuasively, he stated that the colonists would bring an average of \$1,500 for each man in cash or equipment, and promised that none would ever go on the relief rolls.

When the meeting was thrown open for discussion, the first man on his feet demanded, "What about the Japanese fifth columnists at Pearl Harbor?" At that time, the reports of sabotage by Japanese in Hawaii had not been officially denied by the Secretaries of War and of the Navy, and by the Honolulu Chief of Police, as they were later. But Mr. Wada declared his own belief that those charges had been "cooked up by politicians and yellow journals," and added that certainly all of the people he hoped to lead to Utah were completely loyal to the United States.

A county surveyor from Ogden, who happened to be present, rose to say: "I lost two sons at Pearl Harbor, and every time I see a man of Japanese race I shiver; but after hearing your story, I'm ready to let a good many Japs from California come in here. We need them."

Another listener commented, "I'm a Legionnaire, and until I heard Mr. Wada, I was dead against any Japanese coming in here, but now I favor it."

Mr. Wada asked, "Would you be willing to wire that to Governor Maw?"

"Sure," the veteran replied.

A journalist in the audience was so impressed by the plan and by the personality of the man sponsoring it, that he telephoned the governor to urge that the Japanese colony be permitted to come into the state and settle there. At the close of the meeting, forty Utah farmers offered to let Mr. Wada lease or buy their ranches, ranging in size from 100 to 2,000 acres, as the site for the project.

AFTER THIS HOSPITABLE RECEPTION IN DUCHESNE COUNTY, Mr. Wada was tempted to settle there. There was one major drawback—it would be necessary to provide housing and other buildings on any of the available farms. He returned to Keetley for another conference with George A. Fisher. Together, the two men went over the Fisher ranch. There were 3,800 acres of good black loam, the bottom lands well suited to truck gardening, the hill slopes to raising hay and livestock. The necessary irrigation could be done at a low cost. The ranch included fifteen cottages and a large building, divided into ten apartments, all built some years earlier to house the working force of a nearby mine. The mine had curtailed operations, and for some time the dwellings had not been used except in the "dude ranch" season. Mr. Fisher offered a lease at two dollars an acre, including the buildings, and his own services as adviser to the new community.

Mr. Wada paid a \$500 binder at once, though the arrangement was to be considered tentative until Mr. Fisher had made his own inquiries as to the members of the proposed colony, and secured the necessary clearance from the army authorities.

The next step was to present the plan to Governor Maw. With Mr. Trevithick and Mr. Fisher, Fred Wada explained his project. The governor was impressed, but voiced the fear that, unwittingly, a disloyal individual might be included among the colonists. Said Mr. Wada, "Governor, if any of them make trouble or prove to be disloyal in any way to the United States, I'll be glad to face the firing squad." The governor finally stated that, while he could not allow any Japanese to settle near war industries, they could locate anywhere else in the state, "provided I can clear the matter with the county commissioners, and that the local inhabitants raise no serious objections." To Mr. Wada, this seemed a fair decision. On March 16, the governor conferred with the commissioners of twenty-nine counties. Of them all, only the commissioners of Duchesne and Uintah Counties were ready to welcome Japanese settlers. But two counties were enough for a start—Mr. Wada felt sure that, once his colony was under way, other Utah counties would be clamoring to have Japanese evacuees help meet their farm labor shortage.

Fred Wada's next task was to convince Mr. Fisher of the dependability of the proposed colonists. The farm owner was taken on a trip through three California counties, during which he had a chance to talk with many Caucasian Californians about their Japanese American neighbors. Thus the district attorney of San Benito county testified, "For the seven years I have been in this office, I never have had occasion to prosecute a single Japanese." The Oakland Community Chest executive told Mr. Fisher that Japanese, to his knowledge, never go on relief. At the end of the tour of inquiry, Mr. Fisher wired Governor Maw that he was fully satisfied. He gave Mr. Wada a year's lease, with an additional four years' option.

It was at this stage that the writer played a small part

in the story. Puzzled over the best way to organize the colony, Mr. Wada came to consult me. We talked for hours, considering and rejecting one scheme after another. I was impressed, as all who know him are, with Mr. Wada's high motives. The thought of personal profit never seemed to cross his mind. In fact, he said with unmistakable sincerity that he was ready to sink \$20,000 in the undertaking. My advice to him finally was to make the colony a non-profit cooperative enterprise, and this met his mind. The way was now clear for the plan to take on reality.

In a surprisingly short time, Mr. Wada enrolled one hundred and thirty picked associates. Forty-five of them were strong, mature men, more than half of them single. There were thirty married women, twenty single women, and thirty-five children. The husbands of six of the married women still were interned. Most of the men were farmers. There were nine graduates of agricultural colleges, three merchants, three auto mechanics, a carpenter, an electrician, a plumber, a barber, a registered pharmacist, four nurses, and four gardeners. All agreed to pool machinery and stocks and to contribute a stated amount for general expenses.

It was only three days before the March 29 deadline that the first party of twenty left California, but by April 1, the whole company reached Utah. Only one colonist failed to get out of California before the "freezing date." This man owned a valuable seeding machine, so complicated that no one else in his community could keep it in repair. The neighboring Caucasian farmers begged him

to stay until he finished seeding their fields. In loyalty to his friends he agreed to do so, even though he knew it meant going behind the barbed wire of an assembly center instead of leaving as a free man with the rest of the colonists. It was only after urgent appeals from many sources that he was allowed to leave for Keetley a month later. He contributed to the colony farm machinery valued at more than \$4,000.

The beginning of the colony meant incredibly hard work, early and late, seven days a week. By the fifteenth of June, when I paid my first visit to Keetley Farms, there were regular rows of strawberry and potato plants in a forty-acre field that had been cleared of fifty tons of stones and roots, and mountains of sagebrush. In addition, there were 110 acres of peas, lettuce, spinach, radishes, and cabbage. In the center of the little settlement, the young men had erected a sign. On both sides, they painted FOOD FOR FREEDOM. Above the sign fluttered the American flag.

The change in the community attitude toward the colony was gradual, but definite. For the first few nights, Mr. Fisher's son served as a voluntary patrolman, to make sure no harm befell the newcomers. Then a state patrolman was stationed at Keetley, "to keep order." But when he reported that he had nothing to do, he was withdrawn. Said Fred Wada, "We have not had one single unpleasant incident."

Many factors have served to bring about harmony between the evacuees and their Caucasian neighbors. The colony has had the interested backing of the officials of the nearby New Park Mine, (*Continued on page 58*)



In the strawberry patch, Wada, founder of the colony, talks things over with the superintendent of a neighboring mine

minds," as the jacket of the book reminds us. Professor Sorokin examines the influence of calamities upon our minds, behavior and vital processes, upon social mobility and organization, upon culture and ideology. War is one of the great calamities; and famine, pestilence, revolution. Professor Sorokin tells us that the shortest, most efficient, and practical way of really alleviating the crisis is by re-integrating its religious and moral values in such a way that the new system is rooted primarily in the values of the Kingdom of God. "Given the values of the Kingdom of God, the worldly problems of food and drink can be solved in passing. Then great calamities; and famine, pestilence, revolution. Professor human history." But without that, calamities are an educative instrument; by pitiless ordeal they remind demoralized man of his divine mission.

Infinitely more limited in scope is the little volume of five wartime addresses by the president of Harvard University. They present a reasoned appeal for clear vision and courageous action. They deal with the American tradition and the unprecedented challenge which it has to meet in these decisive hours of America's and humanity's destiny. President Conant is one of the educational leaders of America who have seen the issues of this war clearly and honestly from the beginning and have not sought refuge in intellectual or moral subterfuges. Long before Pearl Harbor he sounded the call to duty with exemplary courage. Most of the addresses collected in this volume were delivered after the United States was at war. They deal with the question of what we are fighting to defend. No reader will fail to find these brief essays inspiring and encouraging, a guide for the time and a signpost for the future. They will be especially indispensable to educators and young people. They offer a living faith rooted in the best of the past.

Smith College

HANS KOHN

Jewish Life in the United States

THE AMERICAN JEW. A COMPOSITE PORTRAIT, edited by Oscar I. Janowsky. Harper. 322 pp. Price \$2.50, postpaid by Survey Associates, Inc.

THIS BOOK IS AN ALTOGETHER EXCELLENT SYMPOSIUM BY fourteen writers who describe the history, content, objectives, and activities of the American Jewish culture. It assumes cultural pluralism, that is that Judaism is one spoke in the wheel of American civilization. The work is a contribution of Hadassah, one of the great service organizations for Palestinian health and education. Arranged as a study text for Jews, it is a valuable exposition for non-Jews, too.

The volume makes a number of important points. The epic of America is the story of immigrations. European Jews, like English Protestants and Continental Catholics, started to colonize the New World back in the sixteenth century. After participation for a century in the Spanish colonies of South America, the Inquisition caught up with Jews there, and like Protestants and later Catholics, Jews sought freedom in North America. 1655 was the date of the first New Amsterdam synagogue. The Spanish-Portuguese congregation continues today, now being one of 1,330 synagogues in New York City, 3,700 in the U.S.A.

Again like Protestants and Catholics, Jews have had their troubles, culminating in the politico-economic anti-Semitism which plagues the world currently. George N. Shuster, the only Christian writer in the list, points out that Jews are not unique in suffering from hate. Catholics have had more bitter persecution in this nation than have Jews. Protestant sects, too, have suffered here and in dozens of countries. Negroes sing, "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen." It would be psychically bad for Jews to think (and for Christians to believe) that Jews are peculiar in their suffering. J. J. Weinstein wrote the chapter on anti-Semitism, and did a helpful job. His two main remedies are economic righteousness and Zionism. His first recipe ignores "the cleavage of ethos"

strongly emphasized in another current book, "Jews in a Gentile World"; his second proposal would be more convincing as a European argument than in a volume on the American Jews. Jews of old American families and even native born Jews of recent immigration, simply do not have the sense of homelessness which Rabbi Weinstein posits. Zionism is accomplishing wonderful results in Palestine, but to claim that it will cure anti-Semitism in America is a promise which does not make sense.

The book reveals healthy differences of opinion competing with friendly, intellectual rivalry among American Jews today. Here again, Jews are like Christians. David de Sola Pool expresses his love for orthodoxy and at the same time he respectfully recognizes the earnestness of Reform Jews, even though he seems to think that they are on the way out. Rabbi Milton Steinberg brilliantly plugs for modification of both Orthodoxy and Reform to make way for Conservative Reconstruction. It is to be regretted that space did not permit a forthright statement by a Reform leader.

One oversight of the editors is to fail to point out what America has done for Jews. Judaism has influenced and is enriching America. Jews have more Christian friends in this land of liberty than any other land. There is more communication between Jews and Christians, better understanding, higher degrees of cooperation, than in any other country. The twentieth century has brought a structure of community conferences between Christians and Jews in thousands of American towns and cities. American Jews, like Christians, are different because of this friendliness. In this, American Jews are participants in a development in history too important to be omitted from a book of this kind.

Other essays provide excellent historical background material and admirably present information with regard to educational, economic, literary, and community objects of American Judaism. A splendid chapter on Zionism is contributed by Sulamith Schwartz which, in line with the rest of the book, accents religion as the cement of Jewish people. Horace Kallen, one of the most creative thinkers about an American unity among a plural number of cultures, has a final chapter which, alone, would be worth the price of the book.

EVERETT R. CLINCHY
National Conference of Christians and Jews

JAPANESE COLONY: SUCCESS STORY

(Continued from page 43)

and of John R. O'Toole, the Keetley storekeeper. The local of the miners' union early adopted a friendly resolution of welcome to the evacuees. The Mormons, perhaps recalling the persecutions that drove their forefathers to the "Great Western Desert," have shown a marked lack of prejudice. On their part, the colonists have gone out of their way to "help out" neighboring farmers. Their trade—always in cash—has been welcome to the stores in nearby Park City, Heber, and Keetley. When Salt Lake City reported a serious shortage of domestic help, the colony permitted nine of its young women to take household positions. The most difficult good will gesture was to release a group of twenty-nine to leave the Keetley colony and establish a branch colony at Sandy, near Salt Lake City, on the urgent invitation of a large landholder there. In little, as well as big things, the colonists have tried to be good neighbors, lending a hand in time of accident or other emergency, and responding to all community appeals.

The colony's first harvest was more than encouraging. The crops were sold at top prices. By including the wages the colonists received for work on a dozen other ranches, the group was able to perform the seemingly impossible—pay the

entire first year's rental, \$7,000, out of earnings. Further, there was a net profit of \$6,000, which was divided equally among all the workers—men and women, adults and minors.

The harvest in, Mr. Wada confronted the problem of winter work to occupy the colonists during the slack season and at the same time enable them to continue to play a part in the war effort. He learned that the Army Ordnance Department and the War Production Board in Utah are short of labor to handle such jobs as sorting scrap and reclaiming by-product metals from mine tailings. With George A. Fisher's aid, Mr. Wada approached army authorities with an offer to help meet this manpower need, partly with Keetley Farms colonists, partly with trustworthy citizens of Japanese descent from the Topaz Relocation Center nearby. With the prospect that the offer would be accepted, and with plans taking shape for the use of an abandoned CCC camp to house the Japanese American war workers, and for some relaxation of curfew regulations, Mr. Wada wrote me: "I did not sleep one-wink last night for joy. . . . We all can be proud in the streets if this goes through, and not ashamed to face Americans. It will help us prove that our hearts are 100 percent for America. Perhaps in the peaceful time even some politicians will invite us to go back to California because we helped win the war. Now it seems like eight months of hardship is come to sunlight."

RATIONING IS NOT ENOUGH (Continued from page 40)

push the low income family further into the hole by launching a new drive to lift farm prices. Behind this are four national farm organizations which represent chiefly the large commercial farmers. The greed of these big farmers, who profited very handsomely in 1942, imperils our food program and the winning of the war itself. If their demands are met, we can expect to see the barriers against inflation give way on every front. If they are permitted to force food prices up, we shall have hunger and privation beyond the ability of even our long suffering poor to accept in silence. And we shall *not* get the production of all the food that can be produced and is so desperately needed. To get that food we need, not higher farm prices, but direct action by the government to put farm manpower where it is needed, to make foodstuffs available at practical prices, and immediately and forcefully to take all the other steps that must be taken to convert agriculture to a war footing.

Rationing has been promised to us soon only on canned goods and frozen and dried foods. Canned milk goes unrationed. For meat rationing, promised months ago, there is still no date, and not much meat. Rationing of fluid milk, fats and oils, butter, margarine, cheese and eggs has not been promised.

The principle of subsidizing food to keep its price down has been officially frowned upon. Farmers say they do not want subsidies because it will put the government too much in control of agriculture. Dealers do not want them because they fear the government may get tired of subsidizing their wasteful operations and demand reform. Both groups probably suspect that it is easier to get a government administrator to deal them a subsidy out of consumers' pockets, through higher prices, than to give them warrant to draw on the Treasury. Administrators must account for the latter at year end, to the Budget Bureau and to appropriation committees.

Yet that is the issue of subsidies. Shall consumers pay the high cost of getting enough food produced for war needs, or shall the government pay it as it pays for battleships? This is illustrated by another of the dismal bits of evidence appearing



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It is seldom that anyone becomes a writer until he (or she) has been writing for some time. That is why so many authors and writers spring up out of the newspaper business. The day-to-day necessity of writing—of gathering material about which to write—develops their talent, their insight, their background and their confidence as nothing else could.

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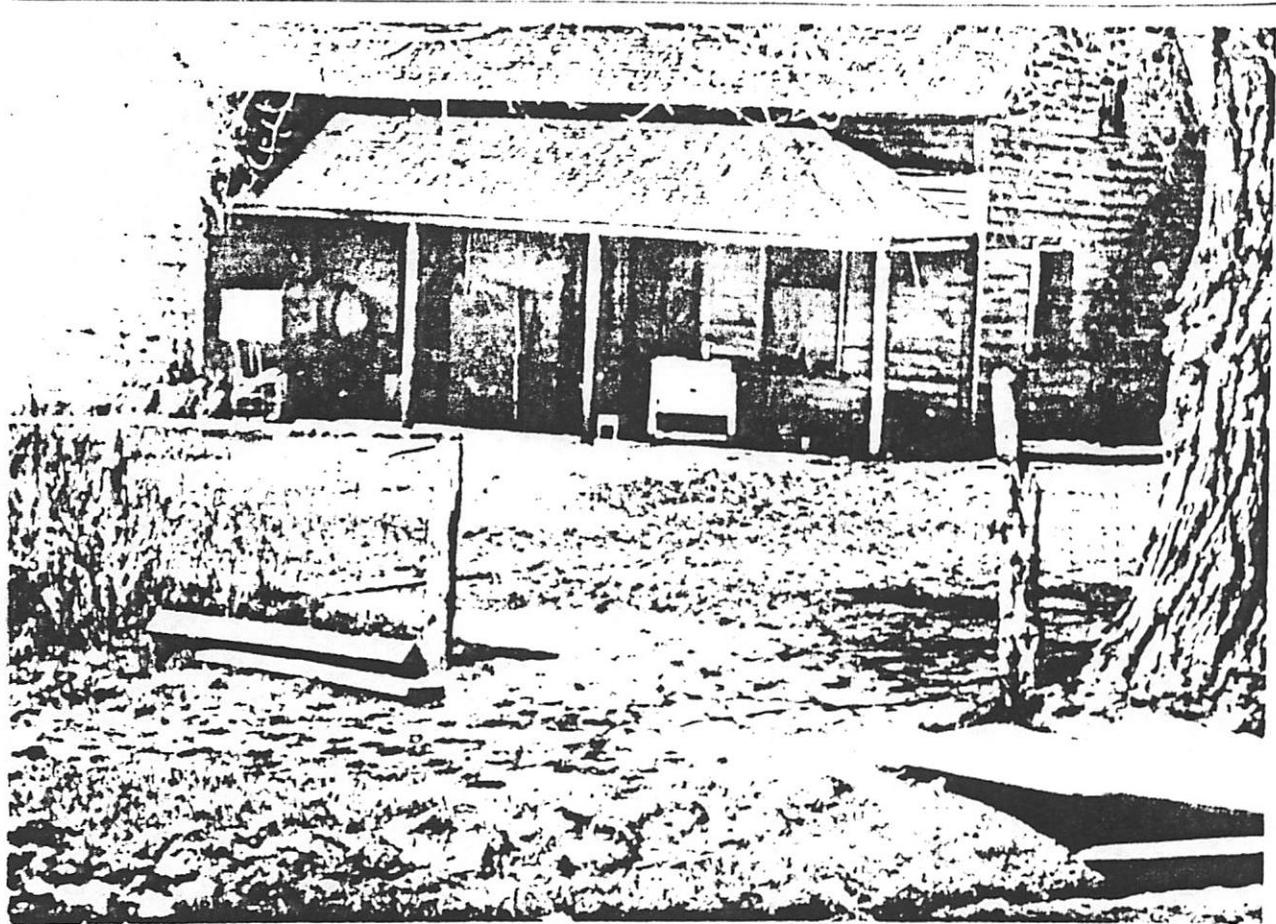
FOOD FOR FREEDOM SIGN

Wada Farm, Keetley, Utah



FRED WADA and HIS FRIEND

At a farm in Keetley, Utah



WADA HOME IN KEETLEY

1942